5. Consideration and return of the Appropriation (No. 4) Bill, 1997, as passed by Lok Sabha.

6. Consideration and passing of the Constitution (Eighty-first Amendment) Bill, 1996, as passed by Lok Sabha.

RE: BRINGING FORWARD THE WOMEN'S BILL, THE LOK PAL BILL AND THE ELECTORAL REFORMS BILL DURING SESSION OF PARLIAMENT ITSELF.

प्रो॰ विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा (दिल्ली): मैडम, यह प्रधान मंत्री ने बाहर भी कहा और टीवी पर भी बार-बार अनाउंस किया कि इस सेशन में वूमेन्स बिल, इलेक्ट्रोरल रिफार्म बिल और लोकपाल बिल ये तीनों बिल इस सेशन में रखे जायेंगे और यहां पर तीन दिन बचे हैं। इन्होंने अगले हफ्ते का पूरा प्रोग्राम अनाउन्स कर दिया है।

प्रो॰ विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा: उसके अंदर तीन बिलों का जिक्र नहीं है इलेक्टोरल बिल, लोकपाल बिल और वीमेन बिल। इसको प्राइम मिनिस्टर ने एक मुद्दा बनाया है कि मैं इस सेशन में जरूर रखूंगा और यहां पर पास कराया जायेगा। उसके बारे में कोई निश्चित टाइम भी नहीं बताया है। अगले हफ्ते के बाद तो सेशन ही खत्म हो जायेगा। उसके बाद 26 से 29 तक कोई मोशन आ ही नहीं सकता, गवर्नमेंट बिजिनेस ही नहीं है तो यह विन्टर सेशन में चला जायेगा। पिछले तीन सेशन से बात चली आ रही है।

What happened and why are they not bringing these three most important Bills? *(Interruptions)*

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA (West Bengal): The exclusion of Women's Bill is really surprising and intriguing. It is surprising and intriguing because the Government had repeatedly been assuring this House, the other house and the nation. The Government has never had any shortfall of making announcements of its intentions but rarely there is an occasion where it has been realised into action so far as reservation for women is concerned.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think, the consideration and passing of the Constitution (Eighty-first) Amendment Bill is ...*(Interruptions)*...

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: No, no. it is about primary education. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI (Uttar Pradesh): The Women's Reservation Bill, the Lok Pal Bill and the Electoral Reforms Bill, all these three are very important. ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA (West Bengal): Yes, all the three are important. The fourth one is Agricultural Workers's Bill, which is also very important. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL (Rajasthan): All these four are important pieces of legislation. They are regarding electoral reforms, Lok Pal, Women's Reservation and Agricultural Workers. What happened to them? The Prime Minister gave assurances in this House. The previous Prime Minister also gave assurances. ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: The Governemnt should discuss these issues. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI): Madam, ... *(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: After Private Members' business, I think, it is at the end of the agenda. ...*(Interruptions)*... Just a second please. Let me give a reply to the hon. Minister. He has put a question. ...*(Interruptions)*... This is a statement by the Minister, Shri Bommai. He has to make a statement on the decision of the Government in respect of the recommendations of the Governing body of Rashtriya Mahila Kosh to permit a self-helping group to determine the interest rate to its memebrs. This is listed as the last busines

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI: If the Chair is kind enough, I have a Bill in the Lok Sabha. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If the House agrees, I do not mind.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI: It is a simple statement. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Before that we wanted a clarification from the Government representative. He is silent. Will you kindly take the trouble to enlighten us. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please, Mr. Bommai, just one minute. Mr. Jaipal Reddy may kindly make the intention of the Government a little more clear on these issues—Womens Bill and Agricultural Workers' Bill.

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI: On the four Bills all of us had been asking, including yourself. That is why there must be an impulse within you also. All these four Bills should come first, along with, of course, the Prasar Bharati.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): Chaturvediji I am not supposed to give cloquent expression of my personal implulses here. Anyway, let me speak for the Government ...*(Interruptions)*... We are committed to all these Bills. It is a question of finding the proper time for these Bills and I will be able to acquaint the Business Advisory Committee which will meet next week about the view of the Government in regard to the timing of the bills and not in regard to the intention of the bills. ...*(Interruptions)*...

प्रो॰ विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा: अगले हफ्ते सेशन समाप्त हो जायेगा तो बिल कब आयेंगे? ...**(व्यवधान)**... बिजनेस एडवाइजरी कमेटी ट्यूजडे को बुलाइये। उन्होंने पूरे के पूरे हफ्ते का ब्यौरा बता दिया है कि कौन-कौन से बिल आने वाले हैं। 14 तारीख के बाद तो कोई सेशन ही नहीं है। उनको बताना चाहिये कि [illegible]

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: I have one small point. Madam, I have received a notice from the Secretariat saying that my Calling Attention on the default of the statutory dues of thousands of workers in the country running to Rs. 1,000 crores has been admitted by you, Madam. The first notice that I received was that it will be discussed on the 7th and I had called the attention of the Minister of Finance which you had also kindly agreed. Subsequently, yesterday I received another notice which says, "It is slated for Monday." But most surprisingly the Minister whose attention I have to call has been omitted. It has been said, "It is Government failure." But in the notice that you had kindly admitted, it was categorically written by me, "It is the failure of the Ministry of Finance." In such a situation, Madam, I really feel intrigued. I would like to know as to which Ministry is going to respond to it. This is the first thing. Secondly, on what date are we going to discuss it?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: As I said, we are trying to have it on Monday. The information has been given to you that we are trying to have it on Monday. Your calling attention has to be dealt with by some Ministries. Therefore, we are trying to find out as to which is the appropriate Ministry to deal with it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: What does it mean, Madam? ...*(Interruptions)*... You have kindly agreed, Madam, that ...*(Interruptions)*... You had agreed that it should receive the attention of the Ministry of Finance. As I understand, the Ministry of Finance is not in a position to respond to my calling attention. Then which is the Ministry to deal with it? It is because of the failure of the Finance Ministry in providing funds due to which the wages of the poor workers are being denied. The owner of these factories is the Government of India. If the Finance Minister does not respond to my calling attention, then it is absolutely infructuous; it is absolutely

passing of buck by the Finance Ministry. I seek your indulgence; Madam. I seek your protection. ...*(Interruptions)*... It is the Finance Minister who has to respond to my caling attention. ...*(Interruptions)*... Will the Government respond as to who is the Minister who is going to respond on its behalf? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Just half a minute, Madam. ...*(Interruptions)*... Madam, I am one of the signatories on that calling attention notice. ...*(Interruptions)*... Unless we definitely know as to when it is going to be discussed and who is going to respond to that calling attention. ...*(Interruptions)*... It is a very important calling attention regarding the workers. Therefore, I would humbly request ...*(Interruptions)*... Mr. Das Gupta, you are asking for the Finance Minister. He will not respond to your calling attention because you described him as arrogant on that evening. Take it from me that he will not respond to your calling attention at least. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is beside the point. ...*(Interruptions)*... That is beside the point. ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: Madam, I want to make just one point. Madam, whenever we ask any Minister about these issues, he would always say that the responsibility lies with the Finance Ministry because they are not giving the money. At the end of the day, the question is: Who is going to give the money? If the Finance Minister is not there and if the Labour Minister is there or some other Minister is there, I do not think he will be in a position to say what we want to hear, that is that the money is coming. ...*(Interruptions)*... In the past also when such issues were raised in the House—it is not that such issues are being raised for the first time in the House—and even when Manmohan Singhji was there, he used to respond to payment to the public sector. It was always the Finance Minister who used to respond. So, it has been happening since the days of Manmohan Singhji. ...*(Interruptions)*... Manmohan Singhji was always prepared to come to the House to respond to these issues. I do not see any reason as to why Chidambaram should not come and respond to this matter. Whatever his personal tiff with Gurudasji, that is a different question. ...*(Interruptions)*... But that should not come on the way of the Finance Minister coming here. Many signatories are there. I am there, Satishji is there, Gurudasji is there and so many others are there. Why should he take it personally? ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please, let me inform you. ...*(Interruptions)*... We had written as per the procedure. When Members give notice of a calling attention and it is found that there is some validity or seriousness in it, it is addressed to the Finance Ministry. Our Secretariat wrote to the Finance Ministry. The hon. Finance Minister wrote back to the Secretariate that it does not concern the Ministry of Finance. He gave certain reasons that this is not through the budgetary allocations, and, if there is any default in the budgetary allocation—I am not giving the exact words; but this is the sum and substance of it—...*(Interruptions)*... Just one second, please. ...*(Interruptions)*... It is not my agreement. It is what the Finance Minister has to answer. I cannot answer it. So, he says that it comes under the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Labour. So, we wrote back to the Ministry of Labour. He has expressed his inability.

Everything is in writing. He expressed his inability and said, "I am not competent to deal with this matter because I am only a Minister for Labour." Then we wrote also to the Minister for Industries because the Finance Minister said that it comes under

back. He also replied that it does not come under him. ...*(Interruptions)*... Just one minute. ...*(Interruptions)*... That is the reason why the Calling Attention which was listed for yesterday could not be taken up. For the last three days, the Secretariat and personally I have been trying our level best that the responsibility be taken up by some Ministry. He wants the Finance Minister and he says that it comes under the Ministry of Industry and Labour. Now, somebody should take the responsibility. I am writing to the Prime Minister to decide Just one second ...*(Interruptions)*... Can you just listen to me? There is no controversy about it because the matter can be covered by many Ministries, not one. Any matter will definitely be covered by the Finance Ministry because it will give the necessary finance. So, we cannot address all our calling attentions to the Finance Ministry. So, I have written to the Prime Minister....*(Interruptions)*... He would decide who should take up the things. The matter would be discussed. I hope, by Monday, we will have the Calling Attention and the Prime Minister will take note of it. Last evening, I personally talked to him. He promised that he is looking into the matter. That is the situation ...*(Interruptions)*...

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DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: Madam, you have said. "We will do everything possible." We appreciate your efforts. You have done everything which is possible. But, at the end of it, the question is, supposing the Ministry of Labour is responsible or supposing the Ministry of Industry is responsible, even then, the money has to be given because so many workers have not been paid salaries. The money is to be given and the Finance Ministry has to be involved.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Biplab Babu, the thing is, who decides the Ministry? It is the prerogative of the Prime Minister to allocate the Ministries. It is for the Prime Minister to decide who he wants to come and answer the question in the House. In any case, the responsibility of the Government together is one. If the Prime Minister asks whichever, Minister then he will have to come or she will have to come. I have writen to him and he has promised me last evening. We will come back to the House, not today because today is the last day of this week; on Monday is the day we will wait for the reply.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Madam, I am totally satisfied the way you have handled this thing. I want only one assurance that the motion must be taken up on Monday ...*(Interruptions)*... No, no. I would only say that the motion may kindly be taken up on Monday.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Gurudasji, I have told you everything. I have given you an assurance that I have written to the Prime Minister. Now, I cannot assure you beyond this ...*(Interruptions)*... What assurance can I give you now? I think, nothing can satisfy you.

DR. BIPLAB DAS GUPTA: Madam,

श्री नगेन्द्र नाथ ओझा (बिहार): मैडम, मैं भी आपसे एक एशोरेंस चाहता हूं?

उपसभापति: मेरे से क्यों चाहते है?

श्री नगेन्द्र नाथ ओझा: मै इसलिए चाहता हूं कि आपने ही इस हाउस में कपलेट पढ़ करके, सुना करके सरकार से निवेदन किया था खेत मजदूरों के कानून के बारे में कि इसको लाइये। मैडम, मैं यह एशोरेंस चाहता हूं कि हर 15 अगस्त को दोहराया जाता है कि यह मांग पूरी की जाएगी और यह बिल लाया जाएगा, लेकिन इस बार ऐसा कहने के लिए सरकार को इजाजत न मिले।

यह बिल नहीं ला रहे हैं इस सैशन में तो 15 अगस्त को यह बिल लाया जाएगा, कानून बनाया जाएगा, फिर इसको दोहराइये मत, क्योंकि पिछले लगातार तीन 15 अगस्त से यही सेम बात की जा रही है, कम से कम इतनी शर्म तो सरकार को जरूर हो कि एक ही बिल को लाने के लिए, कानून बनाने के लिए हर 15 अगस्त को वह मौका न ले, इसका एशोरेंस आपके जरिए हमको जरूर मिलना चाहिए। यह बहुत शर्मनाक बात है कि जिस गरीब और सामाजिक न्याय के लिए बात की जा रही है वह एक्ट यहां पास नहीं किया जा रहा है, वह बिल यहां लाया नहीं जा रहा है?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I cannot give an assurance. You have stated this. The Government is here. They have also heard it. They will convey your sentiments to the department concerned.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Madam, with your permission, may I give one clarification? The List of Business includes the Constitution (Eighty-first) Amendment Bill. It relates to reservation for women in State Legislatures and Lok Sabha. *(Interruptions)* I thought I should give this clarification. I did not know at that time. I have since come to know. I thought I should take the House into confidence and clarify it.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I thought, perhaps, this is the Women's Bill. *(Interruptions)* The Eighty-first Amendment Bill is not in regard to education, but in regard to women. It is listed as one of the items in the business for next week. Therefore, please be here to [illegible] it when it comes from the Lok Sabha. Government is bringing forward the Bill. But you have to put your stamp on it. That is important.

Now, Shri Bommai to make a statement.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SNATAN BISI) in the Chair]

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh-Permission to self-help group to determine rate of lending to members

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, with your permission, I would like to make the following statement.

The Rashtriya Mahila Kosh had been providing funds to the voluntary organisations at an interest rate of 8 percent for on-lending to the poor women. The NGOs, in turn, on-lend these funds to the ultimate borrowers at a rate of interest not exceeding 12 percent.

The National Bank of Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD) has been promoting credit through Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The rate of interest on the loans to the SHGs is at 12 percent. The Self-Help Group is permitted to determine the rate of lending to the members of the group on the basis of the decision of the members of the Group. This allows the Self-Help Group to charge rates higher than 12 percent. The difference between the rate of interest charged to the members and the rate at which the Self-Help Group borrows from the NGO remains with the Group for their common benefit. NABARD had indicated to RMK that if RMK has to be refinanced by NABARD, the terms of lending by RMK should conform to the terms of lending of the NABARD to the Self-Help Groups.

In order to harmonise the operations for SHGs with NABARD, the Governing